2: Schram--4 M-4, 5(1915-1920) 1932 AE9 Monguor AE9

/5/

Preliminary Notes

000 1) General necessity for marriage.

2) Necessity for male descendants.

It seems that two remarks are necessary for a good understanding of this study. It is evident that in order to judge a painting, one must not see it at night in the light of a candle, but during the day in the light desired by the artist; one must even be at the right spot to observe what the author wished to put in it; then only will one understand his work.

Now concerning marriage among the T'ou-jen, the ways of thinking of the East and the West differing completely, it is easy not to see the facts in their true light.

The ways and customs of a people find their explanation in its present-day or former ways of thinking and philosophy. Whether this philosophy be good or bad, we do not judge here, but we must see the facts while seeing through ourselves in order to understand them. To observers with different ways of thinking, the same facts may seem rational and honest to some and puerile and full of horror to others.

1. General Necessity for Marriage

581 589 We Europeans do not find it strange to meet people who are not married; we are not surprised to see bachelors in our offices, at our meetings, at our parties; the idea does not occur to us that being unmarried incriminates them; although deep down we feel that this situation is abnormal, we find, outside of religious principles, enough reasons, if not to justify being single, at least to excuse it.

/6/ Now such a point of view does not exist among the T'ou-jen. No T'ou-jen will understand that a man who is not a monk, who is not a lama, is not married unless he is physically incapable of it.

581 589 183 Also among the T'ou-jen it is polite to find out whether all the sons are already married; to satisfy this law of marriage, one will go

581 /6 cont'd/
589 as far as selling all that one possesses, one's lands, houses, and ani-
183 mals, and will live in indigence; at the death of the parents, the elder married sons, in the case where the possessions are about to be divided up, must, before all else, put aside the sums required for the marriage of the younger unmarried sons; the parents, at the approach of death, will feel the greatest relief in the fact that they have gotten all their sons married. In order to permit the poor to marry, recourse is had to all kinds of contrivances, which very often are only imposed by reason of their primordial goal, which is that of marriage, and which scorn many obligations which in "justice" would seem, at the least, to have to be taken into greater consideration. One will find decisions which will appear unjust, but when one studies this mental attitude, which gives proportion to everything, one will understand that among the T'ou-jen the other principles yield to it and are sacrificed.

554 Marriage, for the T'ou-jen people, is the great affair in life,
581 obligatory above all else. One is no longer an honorable man when one is not married; this is because they believe that man has the duty to live according to natural law, that is, to marry and procreate children.

623 One day one of my catechists was invited to sit with the elders
627 of the village to judge the case of a penniless young man who had
689 run off with a girl of good rank. They had been brought back after
588 an escapade of three years, with a child born during the flight.

The young man was on his knees, his hands tied behind his back, imploring the clemency of the judges and of the whole assembled village. /7/ Despairing, he was saying, of ever being able to marry because of his extreme poverty, he had believed it permissible to act in this way, in order to be able to do his duty and marry. "I have been unjust toward the girl's parents, but I submit myself in advance to make all the reparations possible that will be required of me...." The girl also cries for mercy. "I could have hoped for a better match," she admits, "but I followed this young man to be gracious; without me, he would never have been able to marry..."

681 After an important palaver the offending couple was punished, and the judges found a way to indemnify the injured family and to legalize this union.

/40 cont'd/

11. Farewell Dinner at the Bride's Home

584 The solemnities begin at the bride's home the day preceding
585 the wedding. They are often richer and hoister than the ones at the groom's home on the day of the wedding. They have a special character. No guest of the groom's family is present at this festivity; it is given solely in honor of the relatives of the bride's family and intimate friends. Nobody is invited. It is up to each one to judge whether his relations with the celebrating family permit his presence. The more influence the family has, the more numerous will be the intimate friends. With us, such an uncertainty about the number of guests would be very annoying for the service and would cause a good many surprises at the dinner. Here, this is the least of their worries, for the custom of bringing loaves of bread in the guise of gifts can provide for every eventuality.

587 In the first place, one notices among the guests the members
592 of the family of the bride's mother. They will never fail to be present at the festivity. They consider their presence not /41/ only a duty but a right; thus their absence would be unjustifiable. The elders of the mother's clan are always present. Truly odd way of thinking, they do not go to the festivity to enhance its solemnity nor to give evidence of their friendship to the family, but tanquam potestatem habentes /"as having authority"/. They see in the girl who is leaving the family their daughter who is leaving them; they wish to be present at her departure and show themselves her protectors. One feels in this the unity of the family, one sees in it a feeling of strong cohesiveness; it is the clan which is there at the dinner. They will absent themselves from the dinner at the groom's home, but never from the one at the bride's.

Among the guests are also seen the members of the paternal side of the girl, friends and neighbors. The members of the mother's family take precedence at the dinner.

585 The Orient is pre-eminently the land of ceremonies; at fes-
[183] tivities the guests require that they be rigorously observed; if not, although treated royally, they will not be satisfied and in the whole region criticisms will go about at a good round pace.

/86 cont'd/

Mi 582

has the force of law, which requires taking a wife of one's own race. Savina, Hist. des Miao, p. 284.

/87/ 8. Marriages of Widows as Official Wives

Mo 587 589

Summary. -- 1. Rights of widows, theory and practice. 2. Procedure for the purchase of a widow. 3. Departure of the widow. 4. Settling of accounts. 5. Marriage of widows. 6. Two typical abductions of widows. 7. Vestiges of marriage by abduction among the T'ou-jen.

1. Rights of Widows, Theory and Practice

When parents give a daughter in marriage, they say, "We have taken leave of our daughter," or "We have given our daughter," or even with a slight scorn "We have sold her"; which denotes clearly that a girl's marriage is not her own affair but definitely the business of her parents. On the other hand, when a widow marries, they say, "She has found a man," that is, that she herself has chosen her husband and that she has acted in complete freedom. Besides, the adage says, "Ts'ien kia yeou tié-niang, heou-kia yeou pen-jen;" i.e., the first marriage is arranged by the parents, subsequent marriages no longer depend on the parents but on the widow herself.

The terminology used to indicate those two kinds of marriages, as well as this adage, both throw light on the new situation of a woman in widowhood. Everything depends on her; she will remarry or not, and she will choose by herself the husband she wants. At least this is the theory. Yet in practice her right will be respected as long as her owners find no disadvantage in the decision taken by her. It may even happen that she is married off by force by her parents-in-law, and even that she is simply abducted by an unknown man. This is to say that everywhere praxis differs from speculations /"practice differs from theory",/. But /88/ let us remember this: in case of irrigation, everywhere among the T'ou-jen, the rights of the widow

Mo [183]

[45 cont.]

782
534

[Note on foreign text p. 48-49 cont.] may also be the reason why the Tujen always try to obtain such a conch and blow it in the morning at the incense offering in the yard.

For the rest, the conch in itself is made to order for the offering. It formerly served as an offering bowl; cf. Ch. Das (p. 627). Today it is regarded as the third of the eight offerings (mc'od brgyad) or good-luck symbols (bkra šis rtags brgyad) as a sign of being turned in the right direction, sending out lovely sounds to the ten points of the compass; cf. Filchner (Unkrig): Kumbum, p. 21.

782
183

All these objects that have been enumerated are part of a complete incense offering. Since a family only rarely has these accessories on hand, the offering is usually given in the simple form, that is, people content themselves with cypress twigs, tsamba, and water-sprinkling. Not even butter and milk have been available recently among the Tujen.

[262]

782

Meaning: The incense offering is primarily to heaven, as is the first kowtow. In the second place, it is intended to honor the mountain and earth spirit, and in the third place all the other countless spirits. Oral prayers are not spoken, but one usually says or thinks: "Heaven knows it." The offering is a request for protection and pleases the spirits because of the distinguished gifts. Hence, the men give it at all religious ceremonies, for instance, at the sowing festival, at the veneration of the obo, at the sheep sacrifice, etc. It is left to burn for hours during the entire procedure. Since the Tujen have practiced the incense offering since time immemorial, it constantly recurs in the songs (8).

[776]

[177]

8. [Foreign text p. 49.] The incense

/The Monguors/

N *563 M 769 614 ginning of April according to the lunar calendar, in a festival similar to the Chinese Ch'ing-ming. On this occasion the clan assembles to venerate its ancestors, enjoy a great feast and reunion, and discuss matters of concern to the clan.

On the day of the assembly, the T'u-ssu, the chiefs and elders of the villages and all the family heads go to the graveyard immediately after breakfast, followed by all the other members of the clan. At the graveyard, offerings are made and rites are performed. Then food for the offerings is divided among the families, the oldest generations receiving their portions first.

M [182] [767] This annual veneration of the ancestors serves to reinforce the group unity of the Mongour clan. One of the family heads, usually of the nobility, is appointed to care for the graveyard during the following year. His duties include the collection of contributions and offerings, and the making of repairs. An assistant is assigned to help him with details.

b. Respect for elders and family heads

N *563 M 554 888 The Mongours once lived without chiefs, but never without village elders. Traditionally, the whole power of the clan was vested in the elders, who had the authority to appoint and dismiss chiefs. The village elders still take the most important part in local administration. Elders need not be rich or from noble stock, but they are men of good reputation from the more outstanding families.

N *563 M 554 592 Heads of families are also honored. At public meetings, all are allowed to express their views and defend their rights, but final decisions are made only after the heads of families have spoken.

c. Adultery

N *563 M 684 Adultery is looked upon as a serious crime. If caught, the guilty pair is flogged, the woman on her bare back, the man on bare buttocks and thighs, up to a hundred stripes. The man must confront the husband and make apologies, and present him with a sheep or a pig. A trial is held and fingerprints are taken. Then the pair is led through the village with drums beating while they make public confession of their sin, and they must secure an official statement of pardon.

d. Moral and legal concepts

N *563 M ●183 M [593] [587] [421] Both moral and legal concepts of the Mongours seem to be based upon customs, tradition and what the community accepts as just. Some typical social values and concepts are: Wrongs must be righted and injustices corrected. Parents have authority over their children, and husbands over their wives. A widow has the right to remarry or to dispose of herself. Private property must be protected. No one has the right to disturb the peace of the community.

/The Monguors/

N *563 M 621 183 178

The village effectively governs itself, punishing offenders, righting wrongs and maintaining peace. Great stress is placed upon faithful adherence to the old customs, and one of the important duties of the village chief is to see that they are observed. In any discussion about village affairs, the supreme argument is that of old customs. To neglect or forget the customs of the ancestors would undermine the stability and prosperity of the clan. (See Social Structure.) This conviction is dinned into the ears of the young on every possible occasion. A good test of a prospective village chief or T'u-ssu is his firm and unshakable faith in the strict observance of clan tradition.

M [867]

N *563 M 621 183 177 178

During the administration of the Chinese Nationalists, the village elders had a real struggle to save their old customs and traditions. Social concepts had been undermined gradually by the enrollment of Chinese into Mongour clans, and in villages where Chinese had become elders, Chinese concepts had seeped in and were creating repercussions among the young Mongours.

e. Stealing and gambling

N *563 M [685] [673] [525] [794]

Stealing is considered an unforgiveable sin, and stealing animals is the worst possible form of stealing. All thieves are punished severely: cattle thieves are shown no mercy.

Gambling is not permitted. Any offender must pay a fine, which is used for the upkeep of the temples or the expenses of the spring and autumn religious festivals.

f. Widowhood and remarriage

N *563 M 587

A widow is allowed to remarry, and to make her own decision about whether or whom to marry. If she consents to remarry, she will exchange girdles with her prospective second husband in token of her willingness. If she wishes to marry one man and is being compelled to marry another, she can notify the first of the time of her departure to the home of the second, and the desired mate may kidnap her on the way. If a widow is kidnapped against her will, however, the matter is taken to the chief and the village elders.

g. Discipline of children

N *563 M 867

Children are trained early in life. They attend the meetings at which crimes are discussed and punishment meeted out, and learn first hand that undesirable behavior brings undesirable consequences. They are never shielded from the realities and miseries of life, and as a result they are more sophisticated in their social knowledge than youngsters in other countries.

h. Etiquette

N *563 M 576 264 603

According to custom, only the oldest generation may be seated during meals. When the family is entertaining, the family head presides at the meal. His wife does not sit down unless the guests invite her to do so. During family meals, both grandparents sit on the k'ang, and the elder son may sit on the edge